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Top 10 Questions Regarding the Citizen's Redistricting Commission

1. What is the Citizens Redistricting Commission?

Every 10 years, after the federal government publishes updated census information, California must redraw the boundaries of its Senate, Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts, so that the districts correctly reflect the state's population. The Citizens Redistricting Commission (commission) is a new commission charged with redrawing California's Senate, Assembly, and State Board of Equalization districts based on information gathered during the 2010 census. The commission must draw the districts in conformity with strict, nonpartisan rules designed to create districts of relatively equal population that will provide fair representation for all Californians.

2. Who authorized the creation of the commission?

California voters authorized the creation of the commission when they passed the Voters FIRST Act (Act), which appeared as Proposition 11 on the November 2008 general election ballot.

3. Who can serve on the commission?

The Act requires the State Auditor to initiate an application process for selecting the members of the commission. The application process is open to every registered California voter who:

- Has been continuously registered in California with the same political party, or with no political party, for the five years immediately prior to being appointed to the commission; and
- Has voted in at least two of the last three statewide general elections.

However, an applicant is ineligible to serve on the commission if the applicant has a conflict of interest as defined by the Act.

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An applicant has a conflict of interest if, during the ten years prior to submitting an application, the applicant, or a member of his or her immediate family, as defined in regulation, has:

- Been appointed to, elected to, or a candidate for a California congressional or state office;
- Served as an officer, employee, or paid consultant of a California political party or of the campaign committee of a candidate for California congressional or elective state office;
- Served as an elected or appointed member of a political party central committee in California;
- Been a registered federal lobbyist;
- Been a lobbyist registered with the State of California or a California local government;
- Served as paid California congressional, legislative, or State Board of Equalization staff; or
- Contributed \$2,000 or more to any California congressional, state, or local candidate for elective public office in any year.

An applicant also has a conflict of interest if the applicant is serving as staff or a consultant to, is under contract with, or has an immediate family relationship with the Governor, a member of the Legislature, a California member of Congress, or a member of the State Board of Equalization.

4. How do I apply to become a member of the commission?

You may submit an application to the Bureau of State Audits (bureau) during a 60-day application period that will begin in mid-December 2009. Applicants must submit their applications online through the bureau's Web site. The application may be saved while it is being filled out, and therefore completed during multiple sessions on a computer. Once an application is submitted, an applicant will be able to print a copy of the application as proof of having submitted it. The application will be date and time stamped when the bureau receives it. Once an application is submitted to the bureau, it cannot be changed. Applicants who affirm in their applications that they meet all of the qualifications in the Act for serving on the commission, and do not have a conflict of interest, will be invited to submit a supplemental application containing additional information about their qualifications.

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Any applicant that requires a paper application because the applicant needs a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 may make a request for a paper application from the bureau.

5. How many commission members will there be?

The commission will have 14 members, five members who are Democrats, five members who are Republicans, and four members who are neither Democrats nor Republicans.

6. How will the members of the commission be selected after the application period closes?

The initial and supplemental applications will be passed along to an Applicant Review Panel (panel) consisting of three independent auditors. Once the panel has reviewed all the applications, the panel will select 120 of the “most qualified applicants,” who the panel will interview in Sacramento. The 120 applicants will be divided into three subpools according to party affiliation. One subpool will consist of 40 applicants who are Democrats, a second subpool will consist of 40 applicants who are Republicans, and a third subpool will consist of 40 applicants who are neither Democrats nor Republicans. The bureau will reimburse applicants for their reasonable and necessary travel expenses to participate in an interview.

From the 120 applicants that are interviewed, the panel will select 60 of the most qualified applicants divided into three subpools according to party affiliation. One pool will consist of 20 applicants who are Democrats, a second subpool will consist of 20 applicants who are Republicans, and a third subpool will consist of 20 applicants who are neither Democrats nor Republicans. No later than October 1, 2010, the panel presents the names of the applicants that are in the three sub-pools to the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the Assembly for consideration by the President pro Tempore of the Senate, the Minority Floor Leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the Minority Floor Leader of the Assembly. Each of these legislative leaders may remove up to two applicants from each of the subpools. The names of the applicants not removed from the subpools must be submitted to the State Auditor no later than November 15, 2010. The State Auditor must then, by November 20, 2010, randomly draw from the names remaining in the three subpools the names of three applicants who are Democrats, three applicants who are Republicans and two applicants who are neither Democrats nor Republicans. These eight applicants shall become the first eight members of the commission.

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The first eight members of the commission will then select the final six members of the commission by selecting two commissioners from each of the three subpools that the State Auditor used when drawing the names of the first eight commissioners. The last six commissioners must be appointed by December 31, 2010.

7. How will the new district boundaries get approved?

The commission is required to define the geographic boundaries for 40 Senate districts, 80 Assembly districts, and four State Board of Equalization districts, so that they contain reasonably equal populations. Once the commission has agreed on the geographic boundaries of the districts, the districts will be displayed on three maps: one map displaying the revised Senate districts; a second map displaying the revised Assembly districts; and a third map displaying the revised State Board of Equalization districts. The commission will then vote to approve the three maps. To be approved, each map must receive the affirmative vote of at least three commission members who are Democrats, three commission members who are Republicans, and three commission members who are neither Democrats nor Republicans. Once the commission has approved the three final maps, the maps are certified to the Secretary of State with a report explaining the basis on which the commission made its decisions.

8. Will commission members be paid?

The Act specifies that members of the commission will be compensated at the rate of \$300 dollars for each day a commissioner is engaged in commission business. The act also allows for reimbursement for personal expenses incurred in connection with the duties required of commissioners.

9. How long will commission members serve?

The Act states that the commission will serve for ten years beginning with the selection of the first member by random selection no later than November 20, 2010, and ending with the random selection of the first member of the succeeding commission no later than November 20, 2020. However, most of the work that the commissioners will perform should be completed by the time they approve the maps of the new districts, which is required by September 15, 2011.

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10. Can I keep my current job and still serve on the commission?

The commission's primary redistricting duties will commence no later than January 1, 2011, and end no later than September 15, 2011. During this 9 ½ month period, commission members will be working toward the adoption of three final maps that separately define the district boundaries for the Senate, Assembly, and State Board of Equalization. The commission members will have a presently unknown amount of staff to assist them in the performance of their duties.

However, there will be tasks that only a commission member may perform including, but not limited to holding open meetings at locations throughout the state; reviewing and discussing data that is pertinent to deciding on the geographic boundaries for the different districts; and, voting to approve the final maps.

A person's ability to perform the duties of other employment while serving on the commission will depend on the nature of the employment, but an applicant should assume that his or her time will have to be devoted primarily to the work of the commission during the 9 ½ months that the commission members are working toward the approval of the final maps. To encourage service on the commission, the Act provides that no employer shall discharge, threaten to discharge, or retaliate against any employee for attending a commission meeting.

Following the approval of the final maps, the duties of the commission will be centered on functions such as resolving legal disputes that might arise regarding the redrawn districts and ceremonial activities that the commission determines to be necessary. During this period, the commission's responsibilities should be flexible enough to permit a normal employment schedule.

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